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Older persons' guide to the
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Older Persons' Guide to the Internet

Have you noticed the increasing frequency with which the media makes reference to the Internet? Have you wondered what the World Wide Web is all about — and how you might benefit from being connected to the Internet?

Read on to discover the wealth of information and services that the Internet has to offer.

Getting started

The Internet is not that complicated. In its simplest form, it is a "network of networks" that enables users to post and access information. Tools called search engines help users find the information they're looking for.

Getting connected to the Internet is easy — either at home through an Internet service provider, or at a public access point at your community centre or public library. Please refer to our fact sheet entitled "Everything you need to know to get connected" for more details.

Communications

One of the most popular uses of the Internet is electronic mail, or E-mail. With E-mail you can keep in touch with family and friends around the world. You can also participate in thousands of Internet discussion groups on subjects as diverse as bird-watching, train travel, pet care and health. Discussion groups provide an opportunity to make new acquaintances, socialize, or find and offer support.

Travel

Become your own travel agent and use the Internet to research the destination of your dreams. Sites, attractions and even local weather reports are available on the Net. You can even book your reservations on-line.

Personal finances

Banking on-line is becoming as commonplace as telephone banking and automated banking machines. All major banks and most credit unions offer their clients a full range of on-line banking services — at rates lower than traditional banking fees. Using your computer, you can transfer money between accounts, pay bills and even check on your investments.

Consumer information

Thinking of buying a big ticket item? The Internet can be used as a research tool. Use it to gather information from manufacturers, retailers, government sources and the media. Find a discussion group where you can ask others what their experience has been with the product.



Retirement

Thinking of retirement? Wanting to improve the quality of your retirement? Visit any of a number of excellent retirement-related Web sites where you'll find financial planning information for Canadians that is designed to help you with all stages of retirement, easy-to-read information about government programs, articles about the psychological aspects of retirement and more.

Working the way that you want

Many workplaces have developed systems to allow remote access to E-mail and other areas of a company network via the Internet. "Telework" may enable you to work from your home or cottage. Part-time work or job-sharing may be another possibility using the Internet.

Housebound Canadians

Many mature Canadians find themselves housebound due to severe weather or poor health. The Internet can serve as a lifeline to the world for these Canadians. They can bank and pay bills on-line. They can buy gifts, order books, music and more. They can read magazines, find new recipes, do genealogical research, play interactive games such as bridge, and pursue hobbies.

Saving money

It is a mistake to think of the Internet as just another expense. By using Internet E-mail, many Canadians are saving significantly in long distance phone charges and postage. Should you choose to do your banking on-line, you could also reduce your banking fees. Buying on-line can also be economical, as many on-line merchants sell their products at discounted prices because they do not need to warehouse the items. If you enjoy magazines but find subscription prices prohibitive, you are in luck. Most magazines have their own Web sites where you can read some or all of the current issue and access complete archives of past issues.

Health information

Looking for health-related information? Through the Internet you can find up-to-date information about diseases, health conditions and the latest research findings. Discussion groups can also be a helpful means of giving and receiving support, or simply sharing your thoughts with others in similar situations. Of course, the Internet cannot replace your doctor, but it can enable you to become a more informed patient.

Web sites of interest

Health Canada's Aging and Seniors Web Resource

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/index.htm>

International Year of Older Persons

<http://iyop-aipa.ic.gc.ca/>





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